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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2016

Fearing the Zika

Dangerous virus could eventually show up in Canada, authorities say.
Page 3

Museum matters

Taking a look back at the Fenian Raids.
Page 6

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Paws for thought

MIKE DINATTISTA /
POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Tattoo artist Jennette Conners, owner of A Tat of Class in Port Erie, teamed up with the Port Colborne Feline Initiative to offer an unconventional fundraiser. Paws for a Cause offers a toon-sized paw print tattoo for a \$50 donation to PCFI. The organization spays and neuters cats at no cost in the lakeside city. See story on Page 7.

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Go fly a kite — and do it indoors

Grenier named NRH chair

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Flying kites isn't just for children or Mary Poppins any more. It's become a hobby for anyone looking to relax and even do some travelling.

Retirees Fred and Donna Taylor have been flying kites for about 20 years. The Port Colborne couple are part of the small kite community in the region. They are members of Niagara Windriders Kite-fliers Association and help organize kite-flying events.

During spring, summer, and fall the association's members gather at H.H. Knoll Lakeside Park in Port Colborne on the last Sunday of each month. The park is overtaken by kites from 10 a.m. to about 4 p.m. Donna said most people show up around lunchtime though because that's when the winds are the best.

"We have a beautiful park in Port Colborne. We get clean, beautiful winds off the lake," she said.

During the winter months Fred and Donna fly their kites indoors at Vale Health and Wellness Centre on the last Sunday of certain months.

On March 27, the Taylors are asking people to join them at the centre from 1 to 3 p.m. It costs \$6 to use the facilities at Vale, but the Taylors will have indoor kites for people to try out.

"We like it because it is also a little bit physical. It's like tai chi, we call it 'kite chi' because if you move too fast the kite will be in shambles... You have to move your body like a tree," Fred said.

Donna agreed and said it is very "zen" because it is a very gentle exercise and it's meditative. There is no wind keeping the kite up; the person really has to concentrate and use their body to keep the kite up.

The couple has travelled all over the world to participate in kite festivals. Recently they were in India for a Kite festival representing Canada. People came from all over the world to fly their kites.

Donna said one aspect they have really enjoyed about kite festivals is meeting people who share their interest. She said the kite community is rather small, so you meet the same people all over the world.

Canada's kite community and number of festivals is very small compared to other places.

The Taylors got to experience kite flying on a whole other level in India. Donna said there was a great number of people flying kites. People would open the doors to their homes to provide access to the rooftops.

"To see a whole city in India get up on their rooftops and fly kites it's exhilarating."

While in India the couple got to participate in a type of kite battle. Donna said people would whip their kites around to try to destroy other kites, but all in good fun. There are similar battles in North America though less aggressive, the purpose is to hook the string, not destroy the kite.

During Port Colborne's Canal Days festival there will be a Canal Kite Day on July 30. Fred and Donna said people come from all over North America to fly their kites and they hope to see more local residents participating.

For international festival information visit the American Kite Fliers Association at <http://kite.org/activities/events/event-calendar>.

To find out more about Fred and Donna's kite flying team called KiteCrazy visit <http://www.kitecrazy.com>.

michelle.allenberg@postmedia.ca



Fred and Donna Taylor are shown with a large totem pole bird kite Donna made for a festival they attended. The couple have been flying kites around the world for about 20 years.

MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Postmedia Network

After a year as a member of Niagara Regional Housing's board of directors, Welland regional Coun. Paul Grenier has taken the reins of the organization.

Grenier, who was elected as board chair last Friday, takes over from Shirley Cordiner, who will remain with the organization as a board member.

In a media release issued Tuesday, Grenier said he is looking forward to working with the organization's staff, board members and regional council "to develop solutions to the Niagara housing shortage."

"I believe all people deserve the safety, and dignity of housing. Shelter is a human right," Grenier said. "NRH's vision of affordable, accessible and quality housing for all residents is a vision I proudly share and will work towards during my tenure."

The organization's chief executive officer director, Ellen Batmain, described Grenier as "a champion of housing issues," who is eager to move the organization's objectives forward.

Other board executive members include: vice-chair Patrick O'Neill from Niagara-on-the-Lake, the chief executive officer of Ina Grafton Cage Village in St. Catharines; secretary Henry D'Angelo, a Thorold regional councillor; and treasurer Karen Blackley from Thorold.



GRENIER

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FEB 13

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St. Catharines

Zika virus at bay in Canada for now

Vandals destroy Niagara Safety Village in break-in

DOM FRASER
Postmedia Network

A researcher says it's too early to know if the rapidly spreading Zika mosquito virus could make it to Canada.

But with winter keeping bugs at bay, we're fine for now, said Brock University medical entomologist Dr. Fiona Hunter.

"Since we do not have mosquitoes at this time of year, we're safe," she said recently.

However, there is concern the virus — linked to birth defects in thousands of babies in Brazil — could arise here during warmer summer months.

"We're not sure which species that are found in North America might potentially (be able to transmit) the virus," Hunter said, adding the Public Health Agency of Canada is coming up with a plan to test certain mosquitoes.

Hunter said any virus creep northward would be noticed first in the U.S. and hopefully provide Canada with advance warning.

This, as World Health Organization officials announced Thursday they're creating an emergency committee on Zika virus. That follows reports from Brazil and other countries that Zika may be linked to a spike in microcephaly, a condition believed to cause under-developed brains and abnormally small heads in newborns whose mother was infected.

Canada's public health agency has issued a travel advisory recommending



Brock University medical entomologist Dr. Fiona Hunter.

POSTMEDIA NETWORK

women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant defer travel to Zika-affected countries until after the pregnancy.

A number of Canadians have been reported with the virus as a result of travel to affected areas.

Those most recent sites include swaths of Central and South America and the Caribbean.

A media release from Brock researchers advises Zika is transmitted by two types of mosquitoes — Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus, and the aegypti mosquito is not known to survive cold Canadian winters.

However, the other Zika-

carrying mosquito, albopictus, is found as far north as New Jersey, southern New York state and Pennsylvania. While it hasn't yet reached Canada, research models predict albopictus could breed in southern Ontario with a warming climate.

Hunter said immediate worries about the virus possibly spreading from travellers coming to Canada should be tempered by screening for potential blood donors, or by not accepting donations from people who've been in affected areas.

While Canada has none of the two Aedes, there are other mosquitoes in that genus that live here and could pos-

sibly transmit the virus in the future.

"We have an invasive species that settled here about 10 years ago," Hunter said. So it's just a matter of time with global climate change until Aedes albopictus comes here."

At issue is the fact someone could travel from a Zika-affected area, not know they have it, and get bitten by a homegrown mosquito genus that can carry the virus. The infected mosquito could then bite and infect others.

"As for the likelihood of that, we really just don't know," Hunter said. "If ... it moves northward, we'll see evidence of that in the States before it hits here."

Meanwhile, another Brock researcher is playing a part in the push against Zika.

"As soon as we saw the Zika virus outbreak, we jumped on work to make the nucleic acid-based diagnostic kit for this virus," said Brock biotechnologist Dr. Yousef Haj-Ahmad.

That kit will be made by Haj-Ahmad's Thorold company, Norgen BioTek Corp.

Norgen has already made more than 100 diagnostic kits for various viral and bacterial pathogens.

"Essentially, RNA (ribonucleic acid) is purified from blood and tested for the presence or absence of the Zika virus," he said, adding the turnaround time for results is a few hours.

His Zika kit should be available for world distribution in about a week, he said.

dom.fraser@summedia.ca

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Vandals have caused extensive damage to the tiny Niagara town where children learn rules of the road and fire safety.

Niagara Regional Police said 21 of the 25 hollow miniature buildings at Niagara Safety Village and two safety vehicles, an ambulance and school bus, were damaged Saturday night.

Police said both vehicles were "demolished." They said there were 24 broken windows of a variety of sizes.

Also damaged were five metal doors and a wooden railing.

Damage is in excess of \$20,000. As of Monday evening, no one had been arrested in connection with the vandalism.

Shirley Cordner, executive director of the not-for-profit centre, said she received a call from Niagara College security at about 3 a.m. saying there was a problem.

When she arrived at the safety village, on the college campus at the corner of Woodward and Rice roads, she first learned three buildings had windows smashed.

Cordner said the main building did not have any damage and the centre will continue to run programs in the building.

An ambulance and a bus were also damaged, including broken windows. Cordner said someone urinated inside the bus.

"We are a not-for-profit. They did damage for the hell of it," she said.

Cordner said police have estimated damage to be about

“It is disturbing to see the disregard and disrespect shown by an individual or group of people who somehow thought these belligerent actions would provide them with some lasting satisfaction.”

Niagara EMS chief Kevin Smith

\$20,000.

Niagara EMS chief Kevin Smith visited the safety village on Sunday to see the extent of the damage.

"It is disturbing to see the disregard and disrespect shown by an individual or group of people who somehow thought these belligerent actions would provide them with some lasting satisfaction," Smith said in a news release.

He said Niagara EMS, which also provides instruction from the centre, will work with the safety village to ensure it will be ready to greet children when they visit in the coming months.

"We also remain committed to reassure our children that they live in a community that values safety and well-being, regardless of what we have seen evidence to the contrary here today," Smith said.

michelle.allenberg@summedia.ca



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Vandals struck Niagara Safety Village Saturday night in Welland. More than \$20,000 damage was caused.

PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES RESPOND TO ZIKA

In a release Friday, provincial health minister Dr. Eric Hoskins and Dr. David Williams, acting chief medical officer of health, said health partners are monitoring the Zika virus infection.

"The risk to Ontarians is very low, as the mosquitoes known to transmit the virus are not established in Canada and are not well-suited to our climate," said their release.

It says evidence suggests Zika is likely to persist and spread in the Americas and south Pacific. There is ongoing risk to Ontarians travelling to regions affected by the virus.

Travellers should protect themselves by taking measures against mosquito

bites and consulting with their health care provider.

It recommends women who are pregnant or considering pregnancy discuss travel plans with their health care provider to assess risk, and consider postponing travel to Zika virus areas.

Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara Region's associate medical officer of health, notes:

■ Zika virus has historically been found in West Africa and southeast Asia and only recently been discovered in the Americas.
■ It is nearly always a mild illness — 80% of people get

no symptoms, the rest get mild symptoms.

■ Mostly a concern for travellers who plan to visit countries that have been affected by the virus.

■ Niagara Region's public health department recommends travellers take precautions against mosquitoes by using bug spray with DEET and covering exposed skin.

Links
Public Health Agency of Canada travel health notice

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/travel-prm/notes-avis/notices-avis-eng.php?id=143
Niagara Region
www.niagararegion.ca/health/vaccinations/travel/default.aspx

POINT OF VIEW

Stories showed best and worst of human nature

When you opened your paper Monday, you saw the best and the worst of human nature illustrated in two stories.

It's our inclination to choose a good news story over a bad one, so that's where we will start. With the story of John Scott.

The former Thorold Blackhawks junior B player and now professional hockey journeyman — whose name is invariably prefaced in the sports pages by descriptions like "the six-foot-eight, 270 pound hulking behemoth" or something like that — was named MVP in the National Hockey League all-star game Sunday.

It was a wonderful story, proving sometimes good guys do finish first. On skill level alone, he clearly doesn't

belong among the other all-stars, but he was voted onto the team in a fans' poll. The fact it had a happy ending is entirely the doing of Scott, a humble, good-humoured man, and the other players. The NHL deserves no credit at all.

After Scott was voted in, the league did its best to humiliate him and discredit the fans who played by the rules the NHL set up.

Scott was traded from the Arizona Coyotes to the Montreal Canadiens, who demoted him to the minors and seemingly ended his chance of playing in the all-star game. League officials apparently also tried to talk him out of attending, implying he would embarrass his young children if he showed up and dared skate with the stars.

But he went anyway — like that other

feel-good sports legend, Rocky, he took his best shot. Scott scored twice and was voted the game's MVP by the fans, who had to write in his name when it didn't appear on the ballot (the NHL proving again it doesn't recognize good PR when it bumps into it).

The other players hoisted Scott onto their shoulders and skated him around the ice.

Endings don't get much happier than that.

Then there is the other story, about vandals trashing Niagara Safety Village, a not-for-profit centre where young kids are taught to stay safe on the streets.

On the editorial page, we like to elevate the discussion. Avoid name calling and criticism of personalities, stick to the issues.

But words escape us in describing who ever did this — "idiots" will have to do. We're sure you can think of a few suitable descriptions of your own.

Because of the idiots' destruction, children from across Niagara are the victims and the adults who run the place are left to clean up the mess.

Eventually, hopefully, the courts will decide how to deal with the vandals, but whatever punishment is meted out likely won't feel satisfactory to the rest of us.

Why not make them raise the money to make the repairs? Or make them work alongside the crews who will have to rebuild the centre?

What do you think is fair? Send us your suggestions in a letter to the editor, at stcs.letters@sunmedia.ca.

Spiritual growth is like that of a growing child

GARY TOMBUCK

Special to Postmedia Network

There are few things in life that bring more joy than the arrival of a newborn baby.

Rooms are decorated, furniture is purchased and clothes are bought in anticipation that all-important day when that new life will arrive. And as the precious baby is delivered, to hold him or her in your arms — that miracle of God's creation is far more than words can express.

What a mighty God! What a wonder-working God, what a mystery for mystery it surely is. We cannot understand the intricate development of any growing child within its mother's womb.

David broke forth in wonder and praise as He contemplated the wonder of it all. He said in Psalm 139:13-14 "For you formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Greater still Almighty God calls and commissions His servants to do great exploits for Him even before they were even born. The Lord told Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a Prophet to the nations." (Jer.1:5).

Greatest yet the timeless God who is also the Alpha and the Omega (the beginning and the end) gives us these two mind-blowing statements:

He chose us in Him before the foundation

of the world (see Ephesians 1:4). And greatest of all, He (Jesus) was foreknown before the foundation of the world. (see 1 Peter 1:20).

In other words, in eternity past even before the fall of Adam and Eve, God planned to redeem those whom He chose and those who in turn repented and put their God given faith and trust in Him.

The new Spiritual Birth is both started, sustained and completed by God the Spirit. In fact the Spirit (pneuma) is likened to the wind. The Lord used this perfect analogy in His encounter with a Pharisee named Nicodemus.

Referring to the all-important fact about being born again, He said to Nicodemus and by extension to everyone else, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound which you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3:8).

The great teacher Nicodemus could not understand this ministry for He was thinking in literal terms. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mothers womb to be born." (John 3:4). He should have known that Jesus was speaking figuratively.

He should also have known the symbolism Ezekiel used in Ezekiel 11:19: "I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh." Adam was dead until God breathed life into Him and he became a living being (see Genesis 2:7).

The key words are "new life."

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, the new has come." (2 Corinthians 5:17).

In the physical birth of a child, there are various stages that parallel the new spiritual birth.

Conception is the start of the pregnancy. This leads to delivery, and then there is physical growth.

In spiritual birth, life begins as God prepares the heart. The soil is rich and receives the seed (God's Word). God alone regenerates as we were dead in our sins (see Ephesians 2:1).

There is also a delivery here as one is delivered from their sins and crosses over from death to life and from darkness to light. It could be an experience like Paul had on the Damascus road, or a far less dramatic experience in the case of Lydia whose heart God gently opened.

It can be a process or a crisis both experiences are just as valid as long as it did in fact happen. It surely does not mean if your parents were Christians that you automatically are. We enter God's kingdom by faith through the turnstile, one click at a time.

Finally, having the physical baby, if healthy, will grow just as spiritually a new born Christian will grow.

Physically, a baby moves from milk to a child who longs for meat. Likewise in the spiritual realm, this is called Christian maturity.

Paul said, "I am in the anguish of child birth until Christ is formed in you." (Galatians 4:19). This spiritual growth is spoken of in First John, where He speaks of spiritual babes, children, young adults and seasoned elderly people. Repent and receive that new birth which means being born again and without which no one can enter heaven.

Gary Tombuck is the pastor at Wainfleet Congregation Christian Church.

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GLT puts the gears to Shakespeare in new comedy

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

Among actors, it's almost sacrilege to say you hate Shakespeare's Hamlet.

So what to do when you've agreed to play theatre's most iconic male role for a Shakespeare in the Park production? Garrison Little Theatre aims to find out with Paul Rudnick's comedy *I Hate Hamlet*.

“

The bad news is, Barrymore can't go back to wherever he came from until this young guy plays Hamlet. He says, 'So we'll be stuck in this apartment until the end of time unless you do it.'”

Mike Ceci

Directed by local theatre veteran Mike Ceci, the play finds a young TV actor (Tom DeGiuli) who accepts a starring role in *Hamlet* after his series is cancelled. He moves into a New York apartment once owned by actor John Barrymore, then has second thoughts about the show.

Enter the spirit of Barrymore (Tim Denis), who informs him he's part of a bizarre fraternity now.

"It seems there's some theatrical tradition that anyone playing Hamlet can call on a past dead Hamlet to get their assistance," says Ceci. "That's



SUPPLIED PHOTO

From left, Tom DeGiuli, Tim Denis and Alex Pederson star in Garrison Little Theatre's production of *I Hate Hamlet*. It starts Feb. 5 in Fort Erie.

why Barrymore's been summoned.

"The bad news is, Barrymore can't go back to wherever he came from until this young guy plays Hamlet. He says, 'So we'll be stuck in this apartment until the end of time unless you do it.'"

The plays also stars Caroleine Ferriday, Zdenka Cole, Alex Pederson and Dave Deelen.

Despite being a fixture in local theatre for decades, Ceci is making his directorial debut with the show. He had nudges in the past from other companies, and finally relented when Fort Erie's Garrison Little Theatre asked.

"I don't know whether it was because they couldn't get any other sucker to do it, or

WHO
WHAT
WHEN
WHY?

What

I Hate Hamlet

When

Feb. 5 to 13

Where

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whether they really thought I could do the job," he says.

It's hardly an easy one to start — a comedy with Shakespearean drama. It's a constant swing from comedy to serious stuff.

Beyond the challenge facing the cast, Ceci has to view things from a whole new perspective.

"When you're on stage, you don't necessarily look at it from what the audience wants to see — you're basically up there trying to remember your lines," he says. "With this one, there are so many little nuances you have to really look at and sort out."

"I had to bring back all the things I've learned over the past 35 years in theatre to look at it from an audience's perspective."

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This Newspaper is Recyclable

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Port Colborne, once a village of about 1,000 people, was pushed past capacity with the arrival of Canadian militiamen in 1866.

Lower and Upper Canada, now known respectively as Quebec and Ontario, were facing an invasion from a group called the Fenian Brotherhood, with about 15,000 militiamen. The brotherhood was formed in the United States in 1858 with the objective of liberating Ireland from British rule. They chose to take over Quebec and Ontario, which was the British Province of Canada, to use as a bargaining chip.

This year is the 150th anniversary of the Fenian Invasion of Canada, which took place in June 1866.

Port Colborne Historical and Museum will celebrate the anniversary with an exhibit that begins on May 1, when the museum reopens for the year. The exhibit will include medals,



Michelle Mason, Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum assistant curator, places a photo of Port Colborne taken in 1866 on a display case.

a sword, photos from the period and other artifacts.

Assistant curator Michelle Mason is hoping people might

have items from the invasion that were passed down to them from family members. She would like to see more artifacts in the exhibit. Anyone can loan or donate these to the museum.

"Ideally I would like to see a uniform, but I think I'm dreaming," Mason said with a laugh.

"It's a milestone," she said of the invasion anniversary. "What is interesting about it is it was a long time ago, but it's still not that long ago. We still have evidence of it. We have some artifacts. We also have a certificate of one of the soldiers applying to get

a medal.

Mason said Port Colborne was a point of interest because the Fenian Brotherhood wanted access to the canal and railway. At the time there were two railway tracks and a port for ships to unload cargo to then be transported by train. Mason said the goal was to take over Port Colborne and then take a train and work toward Toronto.

News of the brotherhood's plan reached Canada and when the militia arrived in Port Colborne, Buffalo, all the trains that would travel to Port Colborne were not there. The Fenian Brotherhood never made it to Port Colborne, but there was a need to protect the area in case an attack did occur.

Mason said Port Colborne was like a staging area because the battle happened in Ridgeway. There were troops posted in Port Colborne. Due to lack of accommodation they had to be housed by locals, and put up in a schoolhouse.

"This was a really sleepy town of 1,000, and you have all the soldiers coming. They don't have enough food for them, they don't have enough place to sleep, so they are sleeping in trains, so it impacted this little community," Mason said.

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Paw prints tattooed for feline fundraiser

FRANKI IKEMAN
Postmedia Network

Port Colborne Feline Initiative has partnered with A Tat of Class to offer an unconventional fundraiser for the month of March.

Paws for a Cause offers a toonie-sized paw-print tattoo for a \$50 donation to PC Feline, an organization that spays and neuters community and stray cats in Port Colborne.

Artist Jennette Connors, who owns A Tat of Class in Fort Erie, said offering her services for the fundraiser has been a very positive experience.

"For the most part, it's for the animals," Connors said. "It's for the love of the animals, the cats, the spay/neuter program."

Connors said for people getting their first tattoo, the small paw print is a good place to start.

"People love the idea that they can come in and do this for a good cause," she said.

"It's maybe 20 minutes to



MIKE DIBATTISTA / POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Tattoo artist Jennette Connors, owner of A Tat of Class in Fort Erie, teamed up with the Port Colborne Feline Initiative to offer an unconventional fundraiser. Paws for a Cause offers a toonie-sized paw print tattoo for a \$50 donation to PCFI. The organization spays and neuters cats at no cost in the lakeside city. Welland Tribune reporter Franki Ikeman got her first tattoo on Jan. 27 to support the cause.

put it on, but it's quick — and I wouldn't say completely painless — but it's nowhere near

what people think it is."

The environment of being inside a spa rather than a tra-

ditional tattoo parlour, Connors said, makes the experience that much less intimid-

ating.

"We're just delighted that people are receptive to it,"

said PC Feline president and founder Kristi Mallinson Vogel.

The fundraiser has been running for about four years. Last year's campaign brought in about \$800, which can get eight or more cats fixed, Mallinson Vogel said.

A spay/neuter surgery, with vaccinations, costs about \$75 per cat, but that cost can go up if the cat needs treatment for any ailments such as fleas or a cold, she said.

At the end of the day it's not uncommon for the total to reach \$100.

"They just keep coming and we just keep fixing them," she said. "There are a lot more out there that need our help."

Connors is hooking now for the month of March and said spots are filling up quickly. Appointments are being booked both at Bridgeburg Spa in Fort Erie or at IQ SalonSpa in St. Catharines. To book, call Connors at 905-341-2101.

franki.ikeman@sunmedia.ca

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main and Japanese chocolate-covered
biscuit sticks for the finale have preg-

nancy craving written all over them.
At the very least, it's a curious culinary
mashup.
For Attilio Lorenzo and Cyndi

Wong-Lorenzo, however, it's a busi-
ness plan.

The husband and wife team are the
proprietors of Don Wong Mexican
Asian Food Mart at 4025 Dorchester
Rd. in Niagara Falls, a one-stop shop
for San Francisco Mission-style bur-
ritos to eat now and rice-vermicelli to
cook later at home.

There's no doubt Mexican take-
out paired with Asian groceries is
quirky. But it's filling a need — for
the Lorenzos and for those lusting
after sweet potatoes and pico de gallo
folded together in one of the most
perfectly portable foods; or in need of
kewpie mayonnaise, pickled ginger
and rice paper.

And if you ask them, really they're
one in the same.

Turn the clock back two years and
the couple was newly transplanted to
Niagara Falls, where Lorenzo grew up.
They moved here because it struck
them as a good place to raise their family.

Still, Lorenzo could be found com-
muting to Toronto every day, slugging
burritos at Mission Burrito, the shop
they opened at McColl and Dundas
streets a decade ago after finding



Eating Niagara

inspiration in the taquerias of San
Francisco.

He stuffed and steamed burritos
non-stop between 11 and 3 every
day, and left the grind more with each
order of carnitas and mile of highway
that passed by him.

Wong-Lorenzo stayed home with
the couple's young children and
longed for the Asian foods readily
available in the big city but harder to
come by in Niagara.

After a car accident during the com-
mute and slipping food quality when
they weren't clocking hours behind
the counter in Toronto, the Lorenzos
packed it in to fill tortillas and shell out
sushi kits in an old paintball outfit at
Niagara Falls' Munroe Plaza instead.

Story continues on Page 9

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TIFFANY HAYES/SPECIAL TO POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Cyndi Wong-Lorenzo and Attilio Lorenzo run Niagara's newest burrito joint and Asian grocery, Don Wong Mexican Asian Food Mart, in Niagara Falls.

Fusion of Mexican, Asian cuisine looks like a winner

FROM PAGE 8

Don Wong opened its doors last November, piquing curiosity for its fusion of Mexican and Asian cuisines and scoring rave reviews in the process.

"We figured let's bring something different to the table," Wong-Lorenzo said. "We love cooking. I know some people have business plans they work on for years. This is more trial and error — let's see where this goes."

Right now, the menu is decidedly Cal-Mex, loaded with barbacoa, chicken, carnitas and sweet potato options. The flagship burrito is the California, filled with barbecued beef and French fries.

But that will change. Tortillas might one day be swapped around, Asian fillings, too, and dumplings will be offered as an alternative side to corn chips and the salsa or guacamole they make fresh each day.

One item that will never be on the menu, however, is a taco filled with ground beef. Save that for the Tes-Mex taco kits from the grocery store, they say. "Every time I make a burrito, I make it just the way I'd want to eat it," Lorenzo said. Six of seven days, he is eating them, so his opinions are strong on the subject. He pays attention to the details, precise in his piling on of rice, guac and hot sauce, and placing the ingredients so they can all be tasted in every bite.

It's safe to say a Don Wong burrito is a benchmark.

Their sweet potato version is fresh and toothsome, the star filling far from dry and pasty like its chain-store counterparts. The house hot sauce kicks with heat and flavour, and the cilantro perks it all up instead of getting lost in the mix.

The hope is to add a fridge filled with ready-made foods to their repertoire. Wong-Lorenzo envisions noodles paired with scratch sauces that busy families

can cook at home, and tubs of their fresh salsas made available to tuck into later.

"We love making food for people,"

Wong-Lorenzo said. "We want to hear feedback from people — the good and bad. We always want to evolve. I'm not a chef, I just love food."

They both do, and they come by it naturally.

Lorenzo's parents ran Mama Angela's Italian restaurant in the mid-1970s. They finished their culinary careers operating the Cotonese Bakery, delivering bread to Niagara Falls' flagship Italian estates until 1988.

Wong-Lorenzo grew up in Toronto the daughter of a garden manager, who served French food with his daughter underfoot in the family business, Sob's Bistro.

The novelty of being in the kitchen wore off by the time Wong-Lorenzo was in high school, but not as quickly as the sheen disappeared from a newly minted career in human resources when she graduated university.

"I was miserable and fell back into food," she recalled. "I should have stayed in food."

The hope is the ever-popular burrito will keep them there. Still, as more Mexican options join the fray, Lorenzo is certain they're nowhere near peak burrito in Niagara.

"It's still going to blow up," Lorenzo said. "I want people to try other burritos and then come here and be blown out of the water."

Strip Mail Gems is a monthly feature of Eating Niagara that focuses on the standout celebrities sandwiched between the convenience stores, laundromats and shops in our plazas throughout the region. Got a favourite hole in the wall I should know about? E-mail eat@eatingniagara.com or tweet @eatingniagara.

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MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Abdul Raman Musa Agha, his wife Hoda Al Tamas and their four children baby boy Zayd Musa Agha, Omar Musa Agha, 7, and twins Hamza Musa Agha and Tala Musa Agha, 5, all at left, are reunited in Port Colborne with Abdul's brother Belal Musa Agha, his wife Hiba El Khoury, and children Jana Musa Agha, 8, and Fares Musa Agha, 4.

Warm welcome given to Syrians in Port Colborne

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

It wasn't your typical morning service at St. James and St. Brendan Church in Port Colborne on Sunday.

The church was boisterous with applause as the congregation welcomed its second refugee family to Port Colborne.

Belal Musa Agha arrived with his wife and two children on Jan. 1. The family had been living in Lebanon after fleeing Syria.

Belal and his family had been anxiously awaiting a reunion with his brother Abdul Raman Musa Agha, his wife Hoda

Al Tamas and their four children: three-month-old Zayd Musa Agha; Omar Musa Agha, 7; and twins Hamza Musa Agha and Tala Musa Agha, 5.

Rev. Canon Robert Harkmans introduced the family to an excited congregation.

"It's hard to know what to say at a time like this... go have a cup of tea with them. Spend some time with them," he said. "Today is such a happy day for us."

In broken English Omar said "thank you, Canada" to a group of children at the church's Sunday school.

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Free programs offered for adults who have diabetes

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Diabetes affects all ages, races, and backgrounds — but it can be a manageable and sometimes preventable disease.

Bridges Community Health Care (BCHC) in Port Colborne has designed free programs to assist adults who have prediabetes, Type 1, and Type 2 diabetes.



Evidence shows that if you have been diagnosed in the prediabetes stage, you have a 40 per cent chance of delaying the onset of diabetes within the next four years if you make significant lifestyle changes."

Christina Dupot

Christina Dupot, registered dietitian at Bridges Community Health Care in Port Colborne, said it's important to inform the community about the services because in five adult Canadians have prediabetes or diabetes.

"Many people don't real-

ize the complications of diabetes can be life threatening or uncomfortable — just decrease your quality of life. And many people are finding out too late," Dupot said.

Dupot said diabetes can't be reversed once the person has it, but it can be managed.

"Evidence shows that if you have been diagnosed in the prediabetes stage, you have a 40 per cent chance of delaying the onset of diabetes within the next four years if you make significant lifestyle changes," Dupot said.

One of the programs offered are Diabetes 101, which is a discussion on the basics of Type 2 diabetes, including what it is and how to manage it.

The program runs Feb. 24 at 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Another program offered is Diabetes Fit, which began in January and runs every Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. It's an exercise program with themes and music. It is low impact so anyone can participate.

To participate in the programs there needs to be a referral from a doctor. People can also call or refer themselves by filling out a form at BCHC.

Shannon Dugas, diabetes educator and registered nurse, said some of the signs of diabetes can be thirst, frequent urination, lethargy, and blurred vision.

Dugas and Dupot said people should be getting checked by their doctor

and finding out about their family history. They suggest people 40 and over, or who are at high risk should get tested by their doctor every three years for diabetes. Those at high risk would have a family history of diabetes or have symptoms.

Dugas provides people with information tal-

lored to the individual. She teaches blood glucose targets and how to use self testing equipment. Dugas also informs people about proper foot care, and medication, including insulin.

Dupot works with people on creating healthy meals and how to eat to manage diabetes.

"While we provide education, we are always working towards self management and encouraging our clients to set small, smart goals to make lifestyle changes and build healthy lifestyle habits," Dupot said.

Those at high risk of diabetes are Aboriginal, African, Asian, Hispanic, or of

South Asian descent, and if you've have gestational diabetes. Dupot said genetics plays a part in developing diabetes, but people can modify their lifestyles to delay or prevent diabetes.

For a complete list of programs visit <http://www.bridgeshc.ca/> or contact BCHC at 289-479-5017.

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Jennifer McQuestion, community engagement manager for Women's Place, talks to Girl Guides about services offered by Women's Place at the Girl Guide book drive on Saturday in Port Colborne.

MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Guides write new chapter by collecting books

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Niagara Girl Guides have been advocating for literacy by collecting more than 1,400 books.

A book drive was held Saturday at Port Colborne Baptist Church on Ridgewood Avenue.

The books collected will be given to Women's Place of South Niagara to be sold at one of the agency's book sales. The funds raised through book sales will help fund frontline operations.

Jennifer McQuestion, community engagement manager for Women's Place, spoke to a small group of girls aged nine to 11 about the services offered by the organization. McQuestion made the talk engaging by asking the girls questions.

The guides also collected items for Port Cares. They filled eight backpacks with school supplies, which were donated to the organization's Back-to-School Program.

Organized by local guide leader Jane Taft and literacy agent Melody McIntyre, the book drive falls into accordance with the United Nations Millennium Development Goal, which is aimed at achieving universal primary education through literacy.

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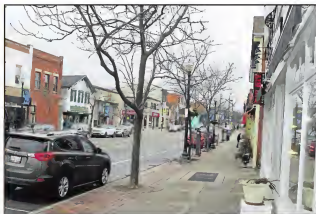
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PHOTOS BY GEORGE BAILEY / SPECIAL TO POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Oakville's downtown is highlighted by a number of businesses operating out of beautiful old buildings.

Oakville's downtown has its charm

GEORGE
BAILEY

Road Trips

Ellen and I headed out on a midweek morning to this lovely community on the shores of Lake Ontario, an easy one-hour drive from St. Catharines.

Once I crossed over the Burlington Skyway, I took the first cutoff at Burlington to Lakeshore Road (Hwy 2) and hugged the shoreline to Oakville's historic downtown. Along this route you'll pass many million-dollar homes that will have you wondering, who buys these homes?

I spoke earlier with Sharlene Flewman, executive director of the Downtown Oakville BIA, who offered to give us a tour of the downtown.

One of the first things she told us was, "Even though we have a population of 182,000, we still consider ourselves a town that feels like a village." As the day went on, we found she was right. When we entered their shops, merchants greeted us with a friendly smile and a warm hello.

We concentrated our visit to the historic Main Street-Lakeshore Road between Navy Street and Trafalgar Road. It's an area steeped in history and culture.

There's an array of architecturally preserved buildings dating back to the 1800s. They've been reborn as boutique shops, art galleries, gourmet food purveyors, bakeries, flower shops, wellness centres and of course, restaurants.



In Oakville, the museum displays a certificate of freedom granted to a former slave.

Here are just a few of the shops we popped into.

Emily Quinn is a high-end furniture located inside a building that once was a TD bank. The bank vault is still here, but it's now filled with gorgeous towels from Turkey and hand-blown Turkish glass. You can see a historical 1860 Northern European antique came made out of one piece of wood — it's yours, for \$5,265.

Burrows has been around for many years. It's a men's clothing shop that provides distinctive clothing.

L'Occitane En Provence has a collection of luxurious shampoos, creams and lotions made in France.

The Black Forest Pastry Shop has been in business for 29 years. The husband-and-wife team of John and Marlene Ziemba were hard at work making some of the best pastry we've ever eaten when we arrived. We took home a bag of butter tarts and a Black Forest cake.

If you've just started your New Year's diet, don't dare not go into this place.

Story continues on Page 17

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Public rezoning meeting



CITY COUNCIL NOTEBOOK

A special public meeting was held ahead of the Port Colborne city council meeting Monday evening for information on a zoning amendment application submitted by a Port Colborne man with property on Forks Road.

The application requests permission to use a mobile home for permanent, year-round living. Lawrence Schneider's existing single detached dwelling was destroyed by a fire in September 2014.

Although the meeting was just for information, many councillors expressed their support for the amendment.

Back to food court for Chorus Niagara singathon



JULIE JOCSAM/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Chorus Niagara will hold its annual singathon at the Seaway Mall food court Feb. 20.

Chorus Niagara is returning to the scene of its greatest moment.

The group will hold its 10th annual Singathon Fundraiser at Seaway Mall's food court, where a flash mob performance of Handel's Messiah became a YouTube sensation in November 2010.

A five-hour concert on Feb. 20 will invite community leaders to try their hand at conducting a chorus of more than 100 singers. Artistic director Robert Cooper will teach the basics of conducting as the group digs into its repertoire of crowd favourites.

The continuous performance begins at 10 a.m. with a free sing-along lesson.

Donations can be made throughout the show, to any member of the choir or online through www.chorusniagara.org.

For the Messiah performance in 2010, Chorus Niagara planted 80 singers in the mall's food court, all bursting out into song for a surprised headline crowd. The resulting video has more than 48 million views on YouTube.

Postmedia Network

GAME DAY SPECIALS

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 7

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Old buildings give downtown Oakville an attractive charm

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

A Taste of Oakville

We didn't realize it when we visited that it was the first day of this annual event. Twenty-six restaurants are offering special prices for lunch and dinner from their menus until Feb. 11.

We sampled one of these lunches at the Piazza Bistro. It was a great

choice. For \$25 each, we had our choice of three starters, four main courses and two desserts. The spicy charred pineapple and butternut squash soup, kale and quinoa salad with grilled salmon followed by bourbon raised bread pudding was a hit with us.

After the meal, we needed to walk. We left the main street and headed

to the nearby Oakville Museum. In this neighbourhood locals call Old Oakville are 30 to 40 homes dating back to the 1850s. Many have plaques at their front door indicating who first occupied the home and their occupations.

The museum is found in a historic home once occupied by Col. William Chisholm and his family. Chisholm,

an enterprising merchant and ship-builder was the founder of Oakville.

With February being Black History Month, we enjoyed the permanent exhibition, Underground Railroad: Next Stop Freedom.

This display tells the story of slave's heroic flight from slavery in nearby United States. One interesting artifact is a copy of a Certificate of Freedom

issued to former slave Branson Johnson, 23, who had been given his freedom by a Maryland court. There's a 30-minute movie available on request.

The museum is closed Mondays but open Tuesday through Sunday 1 to 4:30 p.m. Admission is by donation.

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Caring for Luxurious amaryllis

The end of January marks the third month of the amaryllis project, and I am totally enamoured by their luxurious flowers.

My \$100 investment in a selection of different bulbs has proven to be a very satisfying project, and one of the simplest ways to satisfy both my green thumb and artistic side during the winter months.

The potted amaryllis need only the minimum of attention: the occasional drink of water; adequate sunlight and heat; possibly a bamboo stake here and a little bit of twine there, if the flowers become too heavy; and finally a pair of garden scissors to cut back the stalks when the flowers have finished blooming.

The stalks tend to stretch toward the light, so a quarter turn every day helps keep them upright. I don't mind this extra attention, it gives me a chance to see how the plants are progressing.

The amaryllis project also satisfies my artistic side — it has given me a good excuse to pull out my camera, tripod and reflector, move the furniture aside and turn my living room window into a studio of sorts as I capture the flowers in natural light.

Surprisingly, a west-facing picture window and an over-cast winter afternoon give just enough diffused light to illuminate the delicate amaryllis petals to perfection.

I have not been working on this project alone. Thanks



Green Thumb

to the numerous e-mails and telephone calls I have received from readers on this topic, I know many of you are also growing amaryllis along with me.

Now that the amaryllis are in full bloom, here are a few tips to keep them looking their best.

Once the flowers open, you can move the pot to a cool place out of direct sunlight to extend the life of the bloom. To prevent pollination (signalling that the flowers' reproduction cycle is complete and it is time to shut down), remove the anthers. Flowers will last up to a week with the anthers removed.

If a stem bends under the weight of the flowers, cut it and put it in a vase, amaryllis make long-lasting cut flowers.

The individual flowers on each stalk open and then fade, in sequence. To keep the blooms looking fresh, cut the spent flowers.

If the flower heads look heavy, support the stem with a bamboo cane. Carefully wiggle the cane between the roots in the pot, then use a piece of twine to secure the stem to the cane, a double twist of string in a figure eight pattern is stron-

ger than a single tie.

Some bulbs produce leaves first, and this was a concern for many readers.

In my trials, certain plants produced leaves first, others offered a bud first and still others produced both leaves and bud together. With patience, all of the bulbs bloomed, and the bulbs that took their time and developed stronger roots (and even leaves) produced the biggest blooms.

At one time, I believed that once an amaryllis flowered, it was not worth saving for another year. I've changed my mind. I have seen pictures of six- or seven-year-old plants that bloom with multiple stems of flowers.

Now, I'd like to see if my plants will do the same. Potted amaryllis do apparently live (and flower) for 10 years, or more.

After blooming, amaryllis bulbs need to replenish their stores of energy for the next flowering. Cut back the flower stalk to within 2.5 cm of the bulb. Inspect the bulb, it usually shrinks and is covered with papery layers of skin.

Carefully pull away the dead layers until you see firm, white or green flesh. The dead layers can harbour insects as the plant grows.

At this point, you want to encourage strong leaf production. Bulbs can produce four to 10 leaves, four leaves are the minimum required for the plant to flower again.

Strong roots are also impor-

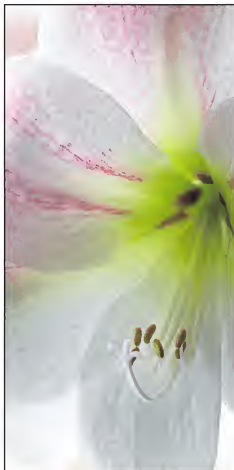
tant. A plant may require a second year of growth while it builds a stronger root system, before blooming again. While in the leaf stage, feed the plant with a water soluble house-plant fertilizer (20-20-20) every second week.

Potted amaryllis can be moved outdoors to a shaded spot, protected from winds, for the summer months. In the fall, trim any yellow leaves, stop fertilizing and gradually stop watering the bulb. This will encourage the bulb to go dormant.

Cut back the leaves and store the pot on its side in a cool wine cellar or basement (10 to 15°C) for about eight weeks. I am testing this method.

The trial bulb is back upstairs, in a new pot with fresh potting soil (the pot should be about the same size, amaryllis like to be pot bound.) The bulb started to green up within a week or 10 days of coming upstairs, I'm feeding it biweekly for the time being. No buds yet, my fingers are crossed.

Theresa Forte is a local garden communicator, photographer and speaker. You can reach her by calling 905-351-7540 or by e-mail at theresa_forte@sympatico.ca.



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16⁹⁹

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- Vegetable Fried Rice

3⁴⁹ your choice

STARTERS 400g/14.1oz

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GAME DAY STARTING LINE-UP

Mushroom Cheese Bites

APPROX. 34 PIECES 450 g (1 lb)
A blend of dried fresh mushrooms, mozzarella cheese, Swiss cheese sauce and seasoning in a crispy, Japanese-style coating.

5⁹⁹



Pizza Rolls 8 ROLLS 454 g
Crispy wrappers filled with zesty tomato sauce, shredded mozzarella cheese and diced pepperoni.

9⁴⁹

Spanakopita

(2 PIECES 340 g)
Flaky phyllo pastries filled with spinach and feta cheese.

7⁴⁹



Four Cheese Bite-Size Pizzas

30 PIECES 590 g
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Firecracker Shrimp

200 g
Tail on, extra large Pacific white shrimp, hand-battered in a hot and spicy, crunchy coating.

12⁹⁹

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10 PIECES 200 g
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